

# The Road Ahead

*Address by Secretary Rusk<sup>1</sup>*

It is a pleasure and privilege to speak to this distinguished audience at the conclusion of this regional foreign policy conference. We in the Department of State are grateful to you, the co-sponsors. Organizations such as yours serve the Nation by helping to inform the American public on issues of critical concern to every citizen.

We in the Department understand that foreign policy has its impact upon every home and every community and that our efforts are aimed at your safety and well-being. Therefore nothing is more important in a free society than the opportunity for give-and-take between the citizen and his government. Our thanks go to Mr. Robert Minckler and Mr. Walter Coombs of the World Affairs Council; to Mr. Theodore Braun, Mr. Elden Smith, and Mr. William B. Miller of Town Hall; and to Mr. George Getty, chairman of the citizens' committee for the conference.

Two years ago last week I held my first news conference as Secretary of State. The transcript<sup>2</sup> shows that I was asked a great many questions about Cuba. I was also asked searching questions about the Congo, Southeast Asia, Berlin, the strengthening of NATO, our foreign aid program in Latin America and elsewhere, disarmament, and the resumption of talks with the Soviet Union about a nuclear test ban.

From a mere listing of the topics one might

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<sup>1</sup> Made before a regional foreign policy conference at Los Angeles, Calif., on Feb. 13 (press release 75 dated Feb. 12, for release Feb. 13). The conference was conducted by the Department of State with the co-sponsorship of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council in cooperation with Town Hall.

<sup>2</sup> BULLETIN of Feb. 27, 1961, p. 296.

assume that the world has changed little in 2 years. But all of us know—certainly we whose daily business is the foreign policy of the United States know—that is not the case. These 2 years have been packed with both crisis and forward movement.

Where do we stand today in our relations with that world beyond our borders which we can influence but not control? How stands the great struggle for freedom which is the basic commitment of ourselves, our 42 allies, and most of the unaligned world?

A Secretary of State cannot indulge in easy optimism. We shall continue to have in front of us a heaping plate of problems, because change is the constant for our generation. During 1963 national elections or other nonviolent changes in government are expected to occur in some 33 nations. And we, as other free peoples, are locked in a world struggle with dangerous adversaries. There remains the necessity to remain alert and to sustain our effort, but there are also reasons for a measure of confidence and satisfaction.

## Situation in Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia in 1961 both Laos and South Viet-Nam were gravely threatened by Communist guerrilla offensives supplied and directed from North Viet-Nam. A Soviet airlift was transporting arms directly to Laotian rebels. At Vienna, in June 1961, President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev agreed that Laos should become an independent, neutral nation.<sup>3</sup> Agreements signed at Geneva last

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<sup>3</sup> For text of a joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. communique, see *ibid.* June 26, 1961, p. 999.

July \* and the formation of a Lao Government of National Union provided a basis on which the armed conflict could be ended and the country unified.

In accordance with the Geneva agreements we withdrew our personnel training the Lao Army and have given our support to Prince Souvanna Phouma, the Prime Minister of the coalition government. However, we are not convinced that the agreements are being loyally supported by the Pathet Lao and the regime in Hanoi. The Viet Minh still have military cadres in Laos, and the Pathet Lao have obstructed the Prime Minister's attempt to effect a national reconciliation.

The Geneva agreements created an opportunity for the landlocked people of Laos to be left alone to work out their own future without outside interference. We shall continue to bend all our efforts to assure that the Geneva agreements are enforced. For what could be a satisfactory solution will remain precarious and old dangers revived if solemn pledges are not fully observed.

In South Viet-Nam, where the Communist aggression attained very serious dimensions in 1961, we took decisive action to help Viet-Nam defend itself. The momentum of the Communist drive has been stopped. Complete victory for South Viet-Nam is not just around the corner, but the guerrillas are losing ground and the number of guerrilla attacks has declined significantly. Major deficiencies in training, intelligence, and mobility have been repaired; government forces have the initiative and are using it with growing effect.

Both the Vietnamese and we recognize that this is a political and social struggle as well as a military conflict. The Government of South Viet-Nam is pushing programs designed both to improve rural life and to provide better protection against Communist assaults and terror tactics. We are confident that they are on the right track and that, with our help, the brave and capable people of South Viet-Nam will preserve their independence and steadily eradicate the Communist infestation.

\* For texts of a Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos and an accompanying protocol, see *ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1962, p. 256.

In the Congo President Kennedy decided that our national interest would best be served by giving full effect to President Eisenhower's decision to support the United Nations in a determined effort to restore order and tranquillity in the face of outside interference. There have been many difficulties along the way, from the very moment of independence in July 1960. But the Congolese have frustrated Communist designs on their country, and the several secessionist movements, of which Katanga was one and a Communist-leaning regime in Stanleyville another, have been unsuccessful. The Congo is still faced with serious problems, but the foundations have been laid for economic recovery and political stability in this potentially rich country in the heart of Africa.

In Europe, West Berlin continues to thrive in freedom. We believe that the Soviet leaders understood that when President Kennedy said we had vital interests there, he meant it—that we and our allies are prepared to do whatever may be necessary to protect the freedom of that city.

#### **Soviet Military Elements in Cuba**

Turning to Cuba, President Kennedy said again at his press conference last week [February 7] that we are reasonably certain that the offensive weapons deployed there under a blanket of secrecy have now been removed. We cannot, of course, be absolutely certain that none remains, in the absence of on-the-spot inspection. But we do not believe that forces now in Cuba represent a serious military threat to the security of this country or of our neighbors. Much of the information on which this judgment is based was set forth in detail last week by Secretary of Defense [Robert S.] McNamara. In the background is the fact which both sides fully understand—that the armed forces of the United States and its neighbors in the hemisphere will insure that arms in Cuba will not be used outside Cuba.

At the same time certain Soviet troops remain in Cuba. As we have said before, we in the Western Hemisphere cannot accept as normal any Soviet military presence in this hemisphere. The authorities in Moscow and Havana must recognize that Soviet military

elements in Cuba do not insure the peace of Cuba but poison the atmosphere and increase the dangers. The sooner this source of potential trouble is eliminated, the better for everyone concerned.

Cuba will not become a base for offensive military operations against other countries of this hemisphere for the simple reason that it will not be permitted to play that role. Communist subversion in Latin America, whether connected with Cuba or not, is being met by the individual and joint actions of the American states. The continuing economic, psychological, and political isolation of the Cuban regime not only protects others from this source of infection but brings home to the people of Cuba that there is no future along the Marxist-Leninist path.

#### **Communism and the Hemisphere**

Having failed in the fifties to prevent the establishment of a Communist regime in Cuba, the United States and its hemispheric partners now face the more difficult problem of finding a cure. The hemisphere is unanimous that the present regime in Cuba is incompatible with the inter-American system and that the policy of the hemisphere must be directed toward the return of a free Cuba to the American family of nations. Precise steps to give effect to this policy must take into realistic account all the elements involved; there are no easy and cheap solutions in a nuclear age. Great risks must be accepted to meet great threats, but issues affecting the life and death of nations must be treated with the sober responsibility exhibited by President Kennedy last fall.

Apart from the crisis over offensive weapons last October,<sup>2</sup> the most important development with regard to Cuba has been the decline of Castro as a symbol of the popular demand for economic and social reform. The betrayal of the Cuban revolution to Communist imperialism has made its indelible mark on Latin America, and those who aspire to change want none of the Castro brand. Communism now benefits from the harsh conditions of life in the hemisphere, conditions which the Alliance for

Progress was designed to improve as a free alternative to the Castro brand of revolution.

Throughout the world communism itself has been losing its appeal as more and more people have come to understand its true nature and objectives. Its inefficiency is underscored by the chronic food shortages in the Communist empires. Its failures as a system of society are dramatized by the fact that it has to string barbed wire and build walls to keep its own people in.

International communism is no longer a single, coordinated world movement. The leaders of its two main branches are quarreling among themselves. We should not draw too much comfort from that quarrel, for it is over methods, not objectives. Both sides are intent on destroying us; both are determined to impose their system on all the people of the earth. But the rift subtracts from the strength as well as the luster of the Communist movement. Throughout the Communist world we see the forces of nationalism at work. And increasingly in the Soviet Union, as well as in Eastern Europe, we see pressures of human beings for more personal freedom.

#### **Allocation of Responsibility in Free World**

There are other reasons to believe that the cause of freedom has made gains in the last two years. The military defenses of the free world have been strengthened. Economically and socially, many of the underdeveloped nations are making encouraging progress. The more advanced nations have achieved new levels of well-being.

There are, however, some further steps that must be taken by the free world and especially by the Atlantic world. One of the first is to bring about a better allocation of responsibility.

Beginning in 1947, while withdrawing before the advance of the anticolonialist wave that swept the earth during this postwar time, the European nations left partial vacuums of power and responsibility which the United States, of necessity, had to enter. Now the European powers have become strong. It is only right and proper that they should again play a leading role in world affairs—a role based on principles of equality and mutual self-

<sup>2</sup> For background, see *ibid.*, Nov. 12, 1962, p. 715.